

Regular physical activity is important for good physical and mental health. It helps improve overall health and fitness, maintain a healthy weight, reduce the risk of many chronic diseases and promotes good mental health. Muscles, bones and joints are adversely affected by the ageing process. Osteoarthritis, osteoporosis and rheumatoid arthritis are not necessarily part of the ageing process but are more common in older people. Researchers are now suggesting that many disorders associated with ageing are due to inactivity and that being physically active can help to reduce or reverse the risk of disability and chronic disease in later life. Osteoarthritis can be greatly improved by specifically strengthening the muscles that support the joint in question i.e. the core muscles for the spine and the quadriceps for the knee.

Self-Care

Self-care is used to describe activities that you can do for yourself. Sometimes dedicating more time to others might mean that you neglect your own health. Self-care also includes making time for activities you enjoy, taking time out to relax, rest, recharge and enjoy your social life.

Age-related changes in bone

Low bone mass means bones are weaker and may increase the risk of breaks from bumps or falls. Try to keep your calcium intake up to reduce deterioration of bones.

Some causes of bone loss include:

- HIV related osteoporosis
- Physical inactivity
- Hormonal changes

Keep Moving

- Movement of the joints helps keep the fluid moving and prevents cartilage from shrinking and stiffening
- Older people can increase muscle mass and bone mass through exercise and strengthening activities, such as Pilates
- Balance and coordination exercises, such as tai chi, yoga or dancing can help reduce the risk of falls.
- Physical activity in later life may delay the progression of osteoporosis
- Exercising in water, which is not weight bearing
- Stretching ,such as yoga is another excellent way to help maintain joint flexibility
- Exercise is also great for lowering blood pressure and reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease

See your doctor before you start any new physical activity program. If you haven't exercised for a long time or have a chronic disease, such as arthritis, your doctor, physiotherapist or exercise physiologist can help tailor an appropriate and safe exercise program for you. If you suffer from osteoporosis, you may also be advised to take more calcium. Sometimes, medications are needed to treat osteoporosis.



Hormone Therapy

There are many benefits of hormone therapy including the development of sexual characteristics of the desired sex and reducing symptoms associated with ageing. Estrogen in women can prevent perimenopausal symptoms, osteoporosis, and colon cancer. Testosterone in men can boost sexual desire, sperm production, bone density, and muscle mass.

Some of the negative impacts include increased blood pressure, risk of blood clots and risk of liver disease, so it's good to get your blood and liver enzymes checked periodically.



It's never too late

You can experience significant health benefits after just two to three months of regular exercise. As an added bonus, if you start being regularly active, your body will continue to benefit from exercise well into later life.

Where to get help

Talk to your doctor, physiotherapist, exercise physiologist, dietician, nutritionists or other health professionals. See your doctor before starting any new exercise program.

Resources

ACON
acon.org.au

Gay and Lesbian Sports Sydney
teamsydney.org.au

Gay and lesbian cycling in Sydney
sydneyspokes.com

The Heart Foundation for free heart health information:
1300 36 27 87
heartfoundation.org.au

A site for social groups to enjoy a range of activities
meetup.com

LGBTI Health Alliance
lgbthealth.org.au

Get Healthy NSW
gethealthynsw.com.au

The Guys Group is a social and activity network for Gay men
sydneyguysgroup.com

Gay Camping NSW
gaycampingnsw.com

Healthy North coast for LGBTI people
healthynorthcoast.org.au/health-service/lgbti/

fitness research
fitnessresearch.edu.au

Health NSW
www.health.nsw.gov.au

Nutrition and older adults
www.nutritionaustralia.org

Health Direct
healthdirect.gov.au

Stroke Foundation
strokefoundation.com.au

The LOVE Project is an ACON initiative aimed at creating better conversations and improved social engagement with older LGBTI community members. By understanding people's needs and preferences the LOVE project aims to facilitate greater social connectivity, improve social inclusion and provide appropriate health information for LGBTI elders.

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